

These Days

GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

together with

Text of Statement

by

Roman Catholic Bishops

in the United States

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Need for Religious Influence in the Home

The function of the state is to assist these three agencies to discharge harmoniously their responsibilities in the best interest of the public welfare. The state must ever keep in mind that children belong to their parents before they belong to the state; the resources to develop them into their full stature as human beings destined for eternal union with God are not the property of political government; these constitute the treasury of families and the Church.

Again, the family, to exercise its good influence in full effectiveness, needs a just measure of economic security. When, in a wealthy and prospering nation, diligent and willing parents are forced to live in grinding poverty; when parents have no opportunity of owning their own home; when the aid of government is extended to those who raise crops or build machines but not to those who rear children, there exists a condition of inequity and even of injustice.

Finally, the family needs religion. It requires the high morality and the unvarying standards of duty which only the spirit of religion can supply to family life. It needs the strong quality of staunch loyalty to God and to His commandments, to His Church and to Her precepts. It needs the filial piety which has its source and support in piety towards God. It needs prayer and the example of prayerfulness.

Ask Renewed Efforts Toward Unity

These, then, are the requisites for family life, if it is to produce its wondrous benefits in full measure and effectiveness; it must be permanent in its establishment and prospects; it must be free from unwarranted interventions; it must have economic security; it must be religious. Yet even when these requisites are not perfectly realized, family life, though hampered, is productive of incalculable good. In the providence of God it is the best of existing human agencies for social benefit. There is grave danger however, that if a godless philosophy be still permitted to prevail, family life among us will not only be further hampered but ultimately destroyed.

It has been said, with a considerable degree of truthfulness, that nothing has contributed to the multiplicity of divorce in this country as has the motion picture industry. What with one picture after the other carefully popularizing and championing the injured party in a marriage and, more or less, justifying, seemingly at least, in the mind of the viewers, any steps that the injured party may take towards divorce, it's no wonder that Americans have become hardened in conscience on the question of divorce and marital infidelity.

However bad it may have been in the past in this regard, it will probably grow worse, and soon.

Now . . . we have television to contend with . . . and this can give us ten times more concern since it goes right into the centre of the home. This week, Studio One, a popular dramatic presentation, featured a play called "The Other Father", written by Laura Hobson, famous for her authorship of "Gentleman's Agreement". This play was an open attack on the sanctity of marriage. It definitely minimized the evils of divorce and put a quasi stamp of approval on keeping company with a married man on the flimsy excuse that his wife was a hopeless invalid. We didn't like it at all from a moral viewpoint. We recognized the dangers that it created for its viewers, especially the young people.

Because of this, and many others like it, we are prompted to counsel parents to be cautious enough to warn their children on the immorality of things they view on the television screen. When something is presented that definitely offends good taste or proper morals, why not point out to the children just why a good Catholic cannot subscribe to it. Pursuance of this policy will go far in avoiding many a heartache later.

We dislike finding fault with the television industry here in these columns, but the day has come for it to do something in the way of censorship. The intimacy of television can be used for good as well as bad. It's time we demand what is good.

Editorial in The Catholic Standard and Times

"We hate Christianity and Christians," proclaimed Anatole Lunacharsky, Soviet Commissar of Education. "Even the best of them must be considered our worst enemies. They preach love of one's neighbor and mercy, which is contrary to our principles. What we want is hate. . . . Only then will we conquer the Universe." (Quoted in IZVESTIA)

The one thing that terrifies the godless world over is the fear that some day all those who believe in Christ will wake up--and START ACTING THEIR BELIEFS.

Once that happens, most of the great problems which plague mankind will disappear overnight.

from "You Can Change the World", copyright 1948 by The Christophers, Inc.

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Greatest Human Social Influence

Social philosophers, as well as the great masses of mankind schooled only in sanity and common human experience, agree upon the importance of the family to individual man. The formative years of life are normally passed in the bosom of the family. Family life encircles the child with no mere casual set of surroundings. It is his constant school; it is his realm, his world. No human social influence can compare with the family in power to form and to direct the individual lives of men.

The state measures its true strength by the stability of family life among its citizenry. For the family is the social cell. It is the family that produces the citizen. No nation can be greater than its families. In vain does the world that disregards the injunction of God loosen family ties and break up family life and then look to state schools to produce good citizens. At its best the school is only a strong aid to the home. Virtue is the basis of good citizenship. The State which weakens the family inflicts deep injury upon itself. Any attack of the State on family life is suicidal.

No less important is the role of the family for the Church. The Son of God, when He walked among men, set up His one Church as a kind of family, and its members call that Church their Holy Mother. Only those who know and live the family life of that Church can appreciate the glory and the solace of soul that abides in this earthly home of the human spirit. The Church, through the Sacrament of Matrimony, constantly channels the essential grace of God to her faithful children in the home. But history proves that it is God's will and providence that the Church should depend for her continuity and growth, as well as for the devotion of the faithful, upon Christian family life.

State's Obligation to the Family

Since family life is thus essential to the individual, to the State, and to the Church, it follows that whatever protects or promotes good family life is to be diligently fostered. It is of paramount concern to all mankind that family life be preserved in full soundness and moral health.

To exist in full effectiveness, family life must have permanence. This permanence depends chiefly upon the permanence of marriage.

Any marriage which looks to dissolution or divorce, even as a possibility, cannot give its children the security they need; cannot surround children with the enduring atmosphere of home; cannot breathe into children the spirit of true family life. Nor can such a marriage give to husband and wife the complete reliance for their peace and happiness under the exacting conditions of marital duty.

Further, family life must have freedom. There must be no undue intervening of the civil power in the domain of husband and wife. This requirement involves two points of obligation. Freedom implies that rights be respected. The state must respect the rights of the family. It must not therefore fail to provide opportunities for the adequate housing of families, for the requisite schooling of children, for the use of common benefits supplied through the taxing of citizens.

On the other hand, the state must not oppress the family. It must not discount parental authority by invading the home and legislating upon matters which are of strictly domestic concern. It must be neither arbitrary nor tyrannous. It must not usurp the right which belongs to parents, of educating their children. On this score, the part of the state is to furnish opportunity for schooling, and to see that parents are not recreant in making use of the opportunity on behalf of their children. The state cannot force a child to attend this school or that; it cannot prescribe courses of study that may involve intellectual or moral dangers for pupils. Nor can the state make discrimination among families, distributing common benefits to some and withholding them from others.

To the Church belongs the preeminent right to guide the child's spiritual and moral formation; to the parents belongs the natural right to govern and supervise the child's nurture and general education; in society is vested the right to transmit, generally by means of schools, the cultural heritage of successive generations.

Not only does the Declaration of Independence affirm dependence on God, it also affirms dependence on law. After saying that our rights come from God, this historic document adds, "to secure these rights Governments are instituted among Men." In other words, we are dependent on the authority of good government for the preservation of our rights. Authority exists to preserve freedom. This needs to be stressed because there is too general a tendency in our country today to interpret freedom as absence of law and restraint; there are even those who would oppose liberty and law by defining freedom as the right to do whatever you please. Of course you can do anything you please; you can shoot your neighbor's chickens and stuff your mother's mattress with razor blades. You can do these things, but OUGHT you? Freedom is a moral power; not a physical power; not the right to do what you please, but the right to do whatever you ought. But ought implies law, and law implies order, and order implies justice, and justice implies God.

How can we continue to be free unless we keep the traditions, the grounds, and the roots upon which freedom is founded? The greatest defenders of America are not necessarily those who talk the most about freedom and democracy; it is the sick who talk most about health. For that reason I plead that instead of judging religion by its attitude toward democracy we begin to judge democracy by its attitude toward religion. America will save her Stars and Stripes by grounding them on other stars and stripes than those which are on the flag, namely, the stars and stripes of Christ, by Whose stars we have been illumined and by Whose stripes we have been healed."

Excerpts from the statement of the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of the United States at the close of their annual meeting, November 1949

World Moves to Disrupt Home

Perhaps the most evident and devastating effect of the disregard of supernatural faith in human society is to be found in what it has done to family life. The world, which discounts supernatural faith in God's revelation, praises family life, declares its place and function essential to human well-being, and speaks with high sentiment of the sacredness of the home. Yet by countless acts and agencies it moves steadily to disrupt family life and to destroy the home. It approves and facilitates divorce as a cure for domestic ills. It accepts multiple marriages. It sponsors planned parenthood by use of unnatural and degrading means. It is unconcerned, for the most part, about its manifest duty of removing the great difficulties that lie in the way of those who wish to marry and establish homes. Its social legislation in point of suitable housing, decent material facilities, security in income and prospects, is slow, fumbling, and inadequate. An unbelieving world professing recognition of the essential value of family life, actually discounts that value and moves to destroy what it claims to cherish.

All this amounts to a calculated attack upon family life. To counteract this attack it is urgent to have the clear knowledge which faith gives of what the family is, and of what it means to the individual man and to human society.

In the view of faith the family is, first of all, a divine institution. A divine institution is not within man's control to abrogate or alter. It is God's own work. Attack upon it is even humanly speaking disastrous. It strikes tragically at the even balance of right relations, and ends in calamitous disorder.

Faith merely confirms reason in holding that man and wife constitute conjugal society. When their union is blessed with offspring, this society becomes a family. It is a divinely-founded natural society. It is prior, in existence and in its nature, to every state or nation. It is the basic social unit. It has its own native rights which no civil power can take away or unduly limit. To serve and protect the family and its life, states are formed and governments established.

These Days

GEORGE E. SOKOLSKY

Our Nation Stands on Nature's Law (July 3, 1951)

Fundamentally, this nation owes its existence to the yearning of men for liberty of person--to the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

For 169 years, prior to the American Revolution, the men and women who had come to these shores from many countries--England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Spain, Portugal and even Poland--concerned themselves with these problems. They were adherents of many different and separate religious faiths which they wished to pursue without hindrance.

No one had come to the North American Continent because of a deep yearning to be here. Most of the immigrants uprooted themselves from the soil of their ancestors and the traditions of centuries because their days had become filled with miseries. They had suffered religious, social, economic and political persecution. They had left Europe to find freedom.

Their problems and discussions were not unlike those of Job and his friends who, no matter how much they rationalized the situation, were everlastingly faced by the same mystery: What is man? Why is he different from all else in nature? What is his relationship to God?

Job put it this way:

"As God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment: and the Almighty, Who hath vexed my soul;

All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils; My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."

When the 56 men who prepared the Declaration of Independence met to consider separation from Great Britain, they found that they required not one but two statements. The second was a bill of particulars as to the political causes for the separation. This statement makes interesting reading this year, particularly the complaint that deals with depreciated currency.

However, that bill of particulars was not sufficient for such men as Jefferson, Franklin, and the Adamses. They were philosophers who could not get away from the problem that had been troubling their ancestors for so many generations.

More political separation meant too little until morality--that is natural law, the revealed law of God--justified not only the separation but the existence of the new state.

That involved them in one of the most curious phenomena in history, for they founded a new nation not on power but on morality; not in protest but in affirmation. The first statement in the Declaration of Independence has nothing to do with whether England was right or wrong; it had to do with man's relationship to God.

In a word, the American nation came into existence on the affirmation that man is a creation of God and is graced with qualities that are his, at birth, as a special gift from God. Upon these words rests the American nation:

"When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them together, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness--that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."

In these days of intellectual and moral confusion, these words need to be pondered. For nations come and go in history, their strength powered by a spiritual dynamism. Their decay rarely is the product of material deterioration or defeat in war.

These are results, not causes. Their decay is the product of the weakening of their spiritual motivation. A nation that has no faith in its own traditions has no faith in itself and will die.

Our tradition is summarized in the first hundred words or so of the Declaration of Independence. On that rock, we stand.

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World Must Rally Against Godless (August 30, 1951)

In 1947, Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, president of faculty of the Union Theological Seminary, could write in his book, "World Christianity":

"This 'rediscovery of the church' is a by-product of the second world war. It is important to recognize that there has been no direct causal connection. Obviously, the churches did not cause the war; they had little direct effect upon its outcome. In the main, the war has wrought little noteworthy change in the life or strength of the Christian churches..."

In 1951, this is no longer true in many parts of the world. In this same book, Dr. Van Dusen writes of missionary work in such countries as China where during the past two years Christianity has been stomped beneath the hooves of anti-Christian mobs.

We need, I am sure, to think of the battle against the religions of God in all the countries that are controlled from the Kremlin not in terms of Jews or Roman Catholics or Protestants, but as people of the book, sons of God in an identical civilization.

While maintaining our differences, we need to recognize that we are faced by the same enemy who hates us all. Perhaps that hatred will give us the wisdom to unite, not in dogma and ritual, but in the spirit of God.

This is becoming increasingly important as the enemy fights with every weapon, particularly by using the power of the state to corrupt young children.

He rears them in schools where they are separated from all the treasures of human history and thought. They grow believing only what they are permitted to hear and see and they are blind to all the great forces that rescued man from slavery and brought him within the scope of social justice.

The real danger is not the present adult generation, for they have memories of church and synagogue, the joy of prayer, the sense of mercy, the richness of true humility in the presence of God.

They recall the beauty of Easter, the cleansing sense of Passover, the joy of Christmas, the piety of Yom Kippur.

It is the young in the Marxist countries who will never even have heard of the relationship of man to God, who will never have been in a house of worship, who will never have known of a religion of love.

They carry ikons of Stalin and Mao and such creatures. They march behind these ikons. These are their gods.

We saw the photographs of the youth festival in East Germany. There were the ikons, huge photographs of the masters of men, uninspired, monstrous photographs! These ikons are like the idols one sees in the temples of profane religions, vulgar idols.

*From a radio address by
BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN*

"In these days when everyone talks of rights and few of duties, it is important for us Americans to recall that the Declaration of Independence is also a Declaration of Dependence. The Declaration of Independence asserts a double dependence: Dependence on God, and dependence on law as derived from God.

Where do you get your right of free speech? Where do you get freedom of conscience? Whence is derived your right to own property? Do you get these rights and liberties from the State? If you did, the State could take them away. Do you get them from the Federal Government in Washington? If you did, the Federal Government could take them away. Whence come your right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

Read the Declaration of Independence and you will find the answer: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Notice these words: Your Creator has endowed you with rights and liberties; you get them from God! In other words, you are dependent on God, and that initial dependence is the foundation of your independence.

Democracy is based not on the Divine Right of Kings but on the Divine Right of Persons. Each person has a value because God made him, not because the State recognizes him. The day we adopt in our democracy the already widespread ideas of some American jurists that right and justice depend on convention and the spirit of the times, we shall write the death warrant of our independence. When watch-makers set watches according to their whims and not according to a fixed point of reference, such as the sun, we will no longer have the right time; when aviators build machines in repudiation of the laws of gravitation, we will no longer fly; and when we deny God as the foundation of our rights, we shall no longer have rights. The Declaration of Independence is a Declaration of Dependence. We are independent of dictators because we are dependent on God.

Because we are dependent on God, it follows that it is religion's first duty to preserve that relationship between man and his Creator. Religion and democracy therefore are not the same. The two are as different as soul and body. Religion is primarily for the salvation of man's soul, and democracy is primarily for the prosperity and common good of the nation. God is not Caesar and Caesar is not God. Have such religious leaders forgotten, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's" (Matt. 22, 21)?

There is no such thing as saving democracy alone. Democracy is a branch, not a root. The root of democracy is the recognition of the value of a person as a creature of God. To save democracy alone is like saving the false teeth of a drowning man. First save the man and you will save his teeth. First preserve belief in God as the source of rights and liberties and you will save democracy. But not vice versa. Religion's greatest contribution to democracy is in serving something else. Just as a man loves a woman best on condition that he loves virtue more, so religion serves democracy best when it loves God most of all. "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6, 33).

Too long have men taught that God must serve democracy; it is now time to affirm the contrary. Democracy should serve religion--likewise indirectly in the sense that it will be obedient to a Justice born of God and not of expediency; that it will give equal economic advantages to all, provide the normal comforts of life, guarantee employment, in order that citizens being freed from economic or political injustices will be free to serve their God. Democracy serves religion indirectly by removing those inhibitions and disadvantages which stand in the way of men achieving the more glorious liberty of children of God. And if we do not like the suggestion that religion is the soul and not the servant of democracy, it might be well for us to read Washington, "let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

done without any compromise of moral principles. This two-faced way of living explains the scandalous anomaly, evident at times in our national life, of paying lip service to God while failing completely to honor His claims in daily life.

One and the same standard covers stealing from the cash register and dishonest gain derived from public office. It will not do to say, by way of extenuation, that the latter can be excused or condoned because it occurs in the political order.

One and the same standard prohibits false statements about private individuals and false statements about members of minority groups and races. It will not do, by way of excuse, to say that statements of the latter kind can be excused because of long-standing prejudice.

This single standard of morality sets a clear, positive and complete pattern of right living. It gives an integrity of outlook and an integrity of action to daily life. By adhering to this standard, man's life becomes all of a piece, characterized by a sincere singleness of purpose.

Such a life will not have its "Sunday side," in which God's claims are fully respected for a single day, and its "weekday side," in which those claims are completely ignored for the remaining six.

Rather, all aspects of life will be so integrated that the standard to which a man subscribes in his private life will be logically extended to his life in the community. Then, if faithful to moral principles as an individual, he will be faithful to moral principles as a citizen, as a voter, and in all his actions as a member of society.

Religion and Morality

To live by this single standard of morality man needs the motivations and sanctions which only religion can supply. He is not self-sufficient. He must have God's help. As a creature, he is obliged to adore his Creator, to thank Him for blessings conferred, to ask His pardon for wrongs committed and to pray daily for His help on guidance. Nothing less than the faithful discharge of these essential obligations of religion will enable him to attain integrity in his moral life.

We exhort Americans in every walk of life to rededicate themselves to the wisdom of our Founding Fathers--a wisdom which proclaimed God's rightful place in human affairs--a wisdom so memorably expressed by the Father of our Country in his Farewell Address:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports * * * Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles."

To a clergyman friend, President Lincoln made a significant remark during the early days of the Civil War.

"Let us have faith, Mr. President," said the minister, "that the Lord is on our side in this great struggle."

To which Lincoln quietly made answer, "I am not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of right; but it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this Nation may be on the Lord's side."

In this century the young minds of boys and girls can be corrupted into receiving these blown-up photographs as the symbols of, shall we say, power, or is it, fear!

These young people will present to the next generations sick minds because their physical nature will never have been softened by the leavening, pacifying influence of religion, of God's love.

They will know only that struggle begets struggle, that power comes to him who takes it, that man is but a creature like all else in nature, an all-purpose mammal that can talk.

For those who believe in God, this is a responsibility that all must face in this age. Here in our country we quarrel among ourselves over small matters while the enemy destroys our world.

For this is true: our civilization is deeply rooted in the Old and New Testaments, in the bible of both the Jews and the Christians.

Without this foundation, all that we believe to be true must wither and die. Already, in countries of which Dr. Van Dusen wrote in his book only four years ago, we witness the resurgence of brutality, the torture of decent people for their ideas, their beliefs, their faith.

Already we are being faced by the corruption of our own children under our very eyes by so-called scientific methods which teach them that every concept that built their world of liberty is superstition.

Even our political system blossoms on the stem of the Declaration of Independence, which in its preamble makes clear that those inalienable rights which our young people are taught to cherish as the Bill of Rights emanate from nature's God and nature's law.

This is our foundation and we must protect it or our world becomes like the sand of the desert, blinding the spirit, fruitless and unproductive.

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Thanksgiving - A Day of Self-examination (November 21, 1951)

The pause that comes with any holiday can, with advantage, be a moment for self-examination. Thanksgiving Day, in particular, lends itself to that purpose. Otherwise, each day is like the day before, a rhythmic motion from darkness to light and then to darkness again--and nothing more.

Our Thanksgiving holiday is strictly American. It is unrelated to politics, as is the Fourth of July, or to a religious order, as is Easter. It exists by presidential proclamation. Yet, few documents ordering the event grasp at its essential purpose. The noblest of these proclamations was Abraham Lincoln's of March 30, 1863, in which he said:

"Whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord;..

"... We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."

This Thanksgiving proclamation, in nobility of expression, in depth of sentiment, in understanding of the religious motivation of our civilization is as mag-

nificent as the Gettysburg Address. It is a demonstrable fact in history that no civilization has blossomed or long existed, the roots of which are not deep in religious belief and experience.

To assume that Thanksgiving Day is a pause from work, accompanied by the feast of the turkey and pumpkin pie, is to give to Bacchus a day dedicated to God.

There was a time in our land when such a festival was inaugurated with prayer at the family table, when children were taught to realize that the richness of our lives comes from God. Today, too many children must assume that it comes from the breaks that father got, or from the bounty of government, or from the politicians who have set themselves up as feudal lords mailing government checks to their beneficiaries.

Men who thank God for their bread are independent of other men. They raise their eyes heavenward and know the truth. They do not live in fear of man, or government, or power. They know that all men are created to be equal in the eyes of the Lord and when they have returned to that permanent state in which dust is dust, only that remains of them which is eternal, the soul, the holy spirit that is life.

In these troubled times, the thought must come to many: What have I to be thankful for?

Surely, it cannot be for wealth, for automobiles and electrical refrigerators and television sets. For if we had none of these, there still would be much to be thankful for.

We need to be thankful for life itself.

We need to be thankful that our lovely land has not been invaded by a foreign foe, that our cities have not been devastated, that our infants have not been slaughtered by the savagery of wild races emerging to power.

We need to be thankful that, for most of us, sons outlive their fathers, and in those homes that are tortured by the nearness of war tragedy they know that none take lightly their misfortunes and that we join in their sorrows as though they were our own.

We need to be thankful that we have been chosen from among the nations to lead mankind to a peaceful world. Recognizing our own weaknesses and the frailties of those who lead us, we fear the weight of such responsibility and humbly pray that we may not do more harm than good. But we know that whatever we do is in kindness, not to harm, conquer or enslave.

May God bless this day of Thanksgiving!

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Moral Code Same With All Peoples (December 23, 1951)

Last weekend, I spent at Notre Dame University witnessing an event of historic significance. A number of us there tried to recall a similar incident in human history, but we all failed.

It was a meeting of the Natural Law Institute, but this year something entirely new was added to the convocation. Instead of the speakers being Roman Catholic clergy and laymen, the principal lecturers were Dr. Hu Shih, who spoke as a Confucian and a pragmatist; Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, a Moslem, who came all the way from Pakistan; Dr. M. S. Sundaram, a Hindu, first secretary, Embassy of India in Washington; Rabbi Solomon Frechop, of Pittsburgh, who spoke as a Jew. I read a paper on the Buddhist position prepared by Prof. Daisetz T. Suzuki.

To these speakers, in the round-table discussions, must be added Catholics and Protestants, particularly that fascinating Presbyterian, Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson Jr., of Houston, Tex.

Here, under the auspices of a Roman Catholic university, were gathered the representatives of the world's principal religions to discuss their differences and their points of agreement.

a private affair is to violate the most basic claim which God has on man.

Man is a creature. As a creature, he is subject to his Creator in all that he does. There is no time in his life when he is excused from obeying the moral law. The clergyman, the educator, the doctor, the lawyer, the politician, the employer, the employee, husbands, wives and children are alike strictly bound. All human rights and obligations have their source in God's law; otherwise they are meaningless.

Morality and Education

Morality, concerned with bringing human activity into conformity with God's will, has, therefore, a bearing on everything that touches human rights and duties. It has a definite place in the educational life of a nation. The forming of character is part of the educational process; and character cannot be formed unless children are given a clear indication of what is right and what is wrong. This cannot be done without reference to the ultimate standard which determines right and wrong, namely God's law.

No state, no group of educators may reject a truth of the moral order to suit the claim of convenience. The process of determining moral values by the consent of the majority is false in principle and sanction. Morality has its source in God and it binds all men.

It cannot be adequately taught without the motivation of religious truth. Although the training of children along moral lines is primarily the business of the parents and the church, yet it is also the business of the school if education is to give formation to the whole personality.

Morality and Economics

Morality has its place in business and industry because the conditions under which men work, the wages they get, the kind of work they do, all are subject to the jurisdiction of the moral law.

When economic conditions are such that the raising of a family by working people is made dishearteningly difficult and at times impossible, then, those responsible for this deplorable situation are guilty of breaking God's law and they are also accomplices in the sins resulting from their injustice.

Morality and Politics

In politics, the principle that "anything goes" simply because people are thought not to expect any high degree of honor in politicians is grossly wrong. We have to recover that sense of personal obligation on the part of the elected officials which gives meaning and dignity to political life.

Those who are selected for office by their fellowmen are entrusted with grave responsibilities. They have been selected not for self-enrichment but for conscientious public service. In their speech and in their actions they are bound by the same laws of justice and charity which bind private individuals in every other sphere of human activity.

Dishonesty, slander, detraction and defamation of character are as truly transgressions of God's commandments when resorted to by men in political life as they are for all other men.

Moral Standard Applies Universally

There are not two standards of morality. There is only one. It is God's standard. That single standard covers all man's relations to God, to himself, and to the world about him. It applies to every conceivable situation in life--in the home, in business, in the school, or in the field of entertainment.

By its very nature it precludes that double standard which not only tempts man to live his life on two levels, but beguiles him into thinking that this can be

Natural Law and Revelation

These religious and moral truths of the natural order can be known by human reason; but God, in His goodness, through Divine Revelation has helped man to know better and to preserve the natural law. In the Old Testament this revelation was given to God's chosen people. Completed and perfected in the New, it has been communicated to mankind by Jesus Christ and His apostles and it has been entrusted to the Church which Christ Himself established to teach all men.

While the natural law, taught and interpreted by the Church, gives us a guide in many areas of human life, the perfection of human nature is revealed to us in Christ Himself, God-become-Man, the Word-made-Flesh, "full of grace and truth," dwelling among us to be our Way, our Truth and our Life.

Prayer and the Sacraments are the channels through which the grace of Christ comes to elevate human nature until it becomes like unto Him, who is true God and true man. In the supernatural order of grace Christ, the God-man, is the measure of man. Divine Revelation then not only includes the natural law, it complements it, and points the way to the supernatural order of grace.

The natural moral law, however, remains the foundation of the supernatural order as it is the foundation of all man's relations to God, to himself, and to his fellow men.

Upon that law, clarified by Divine Revelation, man, strengthened by grace, must build his life. He need never fear that it will give way under the weight of the trials and tests which life imposes; for he has the inspired words of the Psalmist to assure him: "The man whose heart is set on the law of the Lord stands firm."

When the human heart is governed by the law of the Lord, all human actions, no matter how commonplace or how removed from the eyes of men, are made pleasing to God and meritorious of eternal life. This means that God's will and God's plan for man are kept constantly in mind.

When man has learned to direct his thoughts, his speech, and his actions in this way, it is a sign that he has mastered the great maxim of the moral order--"not my will but Thine be done."

It is an indication that he realizes he must at all times be about his Father's business. The point of reference in his life is no longer his own selfish will, for such a man sees clearly that God holds the central place in his life. He also sees that he enjoys a unique status in that God has committed to him a work which no one else in existence is to perform that work faithfully and diligently. This is the thought which Cardinal Newman so beautifully expressed:

"God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission * * * I have a part in a great work; I am a link in the chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good. I shall do His work." (Meditations and Devotions, pp. 400-401.)

Moral Integrity

Doing God's work means doing God's will. This requires the services of the whole man at every moment of every day that he exists. There is all too frequent today the spectacle of men who divide their lives to suit their own convenience. Only when it serves their selfish purpose do they conform to God's will. Their business life, their professional life, their life in the home, at school, and in the community occupy separate compartments unified by no central force.

God's claims upon such men exist, but they are not honored. Expressions such as "my life is my own affair," or "I may do as I please," or "in politics anything goes," are all too common today. They betray a gross misunderstanding of the moral order and the interlinking relationships which find their correct measure only in God's will.

We must be clear on this point: Man must either acknowledge that a personal God exists or he must deny His existence altogether. There is no middle course. Once he acknowledges that God exists, then the claims of God are co-extensive with all the activities of His creatures. To pretend that any part of his life can be

The differences were many and often profound, and each speaker stood his ground for his own faith and tradition. For instance, Dr. Hakim definitely announced that Islam has nothing to do with the Trinity; that Moslems are Monotheists and Unitarians; Dr. Hu Shih, in a defense of John Dewey, proclaimed himself a pragmatist and an atheist; and so the argument went around the clock.

But as great as were the differences, even more profound was the single point of unity; namely, that all human beings, at all times, and in every religious expression, were groping to find a form of superior or divine intelligence, a creative wisdom beyond man; and all human beings of every clime and kind, in some manner, found the natural law, that is, a moral system based on revelation or on an acceptance of tradition.

To the Jews, Christians, and Moslems, this moral law was revealed by God to man; in some of the other faiths, it came to man in other ways.

But this curious fact stood out: the sum of the discussion established that the natural law is universal; that the moral code of all peoples is identical.

Dr. Hu Shih, who proclaimed himself an atheist, nevertheless said this:

"It is beyond doubt that throughout Medieval China and down to fairly recent centuries, the canon of sacred Scripture of Confucianism...was revered and regarded as the highest authority in matters of morals, law, social relations and government policy. It had the authority of divine law, an authority comparable to that of the Bible in the Christian countries.

"The Confucianist Canon has acquired this authority not merely because of the establishment of Confucianism as a state religion, nor merely because it was required reading in all Chinese schools and used in all civil service examination for the selection of men for public offices, but primarily because some of the books included in the Canon in its broader sense do contain some of the universal principles of justice which, in the words of Aristotle, 'All men, by a natural intuition, feel to be common right and wrong'..."

I could not help thinking, during this session, how wonderful is our country. We are not afraid. We need no thought control. We need no policing of the human mind. Where else could such a congregation of the diverse gather to present in absolute freedom so many points of difference, without hatred, without bigotry, without fear?

We who were not Roman Catholics wondered at the auspices under which we met. For it has been said that Catholics are themselves bigoted and intellectually monopolistic.

Yet, here was utter and complete intellectual freedom. No one was constrained to give the host the last word, in fact, the very last words spoken were mine, a Jew and the son of a Rabbi.

We speak often of inter-faith movements and the necessity of wider tolerance. Here for three days men of the greatest divergence in thought and tradition ate and slept, lectured and argued under one roof and that roof was dedicated to "Our Lady"--Notre Dame.

And there was no question of tolerance, which has in it an element of snobbery and forbearance. It was an atmosphere of equality, of freedom to speak of the truth as each sees the truth.

And when it was over, it was evident that men of good-will can and do search for love and decency and faith--on many different roads.

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STATEMENT

of the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of the United States
at the close of their annual meeting, November 1951

God's Law: The Measure of Man's Conduct

An alarming parallel exists between the situation facing us today and that which faced the Roman Empire 1500 years ago. The problems of the Empire closely resemble those which sorely test us now---barbarism on the outside, refined materialism and moral decay within. Confronted by these problems, what were men of that time concerned with? St. Augustine, who lived in that period, gives us the answer in a memorable passage:

"They do not trouble about the moral degradation of the Empire. All that they ask is that it should be prosperous and secure. 'What concerns us,' they say, 'is that everyone should be able to increase his wealth so that he can afford a lavish expenditure and can keep the weak in subjection. Let the laws protect the rights of property and let them leave man's morals alone. * * * Let there be sumptuous banquets where anybody can play and drink and gorge himself and be dissipated by day or night as much as he pleases or is able. Let the noise of dancing be everywhere and let the theatres resound with lewd merriment. * * * Let the man who dislikes these pleasures be regarded as a public enemy.'" (City of God. Book II, 20.)

Does not all this have a modern ring? Has not a great part of our society been doing and saying the same thing? With the threat of the barbarian on the outside, does our conduct reflect the sobriety of citizens who are conscious that a bell may be tolling for them and for civilization?

We have sent our young men on military expeditions to far-off lands so that justice and freedom may be kept alive in the world; and yet at home we have become careless about the foundations of justice and the roots of freedom. It cannot go well with us if we continue on this course.

The lessons of history are evident to those with eyes that will see. The Roman Empire disintegrated from within; and moral corruption was the main cause of its decline and disappearance. The fate will befall us if we do not awaken to the danger which threatens from within our own household. Mastery over material things will avail us nothing, if we lose mastery over ourselves.

Morality: The Need Today

Mastery over self is the primary concern of morality. The right ordering of our lives in relationship to all other beings so that we may attain our true destiny is the proper function of morality. The fundamental problem which faces us, then, is a moral one.

Morality involves the correct and careful regulation of three relationships: man to God, man to himself, and man to his fellow men. These relationships are so closely linked together that to disturb one is to disturb the whole moral order.

Morality, therefore, viewed in its entirety, has three dimensions: height, depth and breadth. In its height it soars up to God the Supreme Being, from Whom it takes the definitive measure of what is true and good. In its depth, it penetrates the heart of man, laying hold of his entire personality so that even his innermost thoughts and motives are subject to its rule. In its breadth, it embraces men in every station and condition of life and establishes mutual rights and duties.

God's Will: Man's Measure in the Moral Order

By nature, man is a creature, subject to his Creator and responsible to Him for all his actions. By selfish inclination at times, he chooses to be something else, assuming the prerogatives of a creator, establishing his own standards of conduct, and making himself the measure of all things.

This prideful folly on his part brings discord into his own life, and profoundly affects the whole order. Frustration rather than fulfillment becomes his characteristic mark because he does not possess wholly within himself the way of fulfillment that he can discover only in God's plan.

God's will, therefore, is the measure of man. It is the standard by which all human actions must meet the test of their rightness or wrongness. What conforms to God's will is right; and what goes counter to His will is wrong. This is the great and controlling rule of the moral order. Unless man recognizes and lives by this rule, he cannot come to that abundance of life destined for him by God.

If man is to reach this abundance of life, which depends on the fullness of moral character, it must be through the way he lives his everyday life. He has no other course. It is idle and dangerous for him to dream otherwise. The thoughts, attitudes, motives, judgments, and daily deeds which make up his daily round will determine his growth in character.

He must use all his powers to cultivate that growth as the condition for attaining the true purpose of his life. For that it is necessary that he should be guided by a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong in the particular situations of everyday existence.

The Moral Order and Human Reason

How does he come to such knowledge? How can man know what is his place in the divine plan, and what is God's will in the moral decisions he is called upon to make? God has endowed man with intelligence. When rightly used and directed, the human intellect can discover certain fundamental spiritual truths and moral principles which will give order and harmony to man's intellectual and moral life.

What are these truths which right reason can discover? First in importance is the existence of a personal God, all-knowing and all-powerful, the eternal Source from Whom all things derive their being. Next comes the spiritual and immortal nature of man's soul, its freedom, its responsibility and the duty of rendering to God reverence, obedience and all that is embraced under the name of religion.

From man's position as God's rational, free and responsible creature, destined for eternal life, spring the unique dignity of the human individual and his essential equality with his fellow men.

Out of the inherent demands of human nature arises the family as the fundamental unit of human society, based on a permanent and exclusive union of man and woman in marriage. From the essential character of marriage come not only the right of parents to beget children, but also their primary right and duty to educate them properly.

Since neither the individual nor the family is completely independent and self-sustained, there arises the necessity of organized civil society, and in turn, the mutual responsibilities of the individual and family on the one side and of the civil government on the other.

Man's social life becomes intolerable if not impossible unless justice and benevolence govern the operations of the state and relationships between individuals and groups. Without temperance, man can neither live in accordance with his human dignity nor fulfill his obligations to his fellow men. Without fortitude, he cannot bear the trials of life or overcome the difficulties with which he is surrounded.

Furthermore, it is clear that the inherent dignity of the individual and the needs of the family and of society demand a code of sexual morality within the grasp of every mature mind.

These are some of the basic elements of natural law, a law based on human nature; a law which can be discovered by human intelligence and which governs man's relationship with God, with himself, and with the other creatures of God. The principles of the natural law, absolute, stable and unchangeable are applicable to all the changing conditions and circumstances in which man constantly finds himself.